

EDITORIAL COMMENT



A QUESTION OF LOYALTY

JUST as the JOURNAL was going to press for the February number we received a very astonishing communication, without signature or address, claiming to be the report of a two-days' meeting of the nurses of the State of Iowa held in Des Moines on January 4, with a copy of a bill for the registration of nurses adopted at that time.

It is contrary to the policy of this JOURNAL to give space in its pages to anonymous communications of any kind. The signature of the sender need not appear unless so desired, but the writer must give her name and address in full to the editor in order to receive recognition. This Iowa communication possibly may not be authentic, but if it is true that the nurses of that State have drafted, considered for two days, and adopted the bill for registration that accompanied the report, then we can only say that the nurses of Iowa have been culpably disloyal to their profession.

The report says: "Our Committee on Legislation reported that they had learned some lessons from our sister States and tried to make the bill as simple as possible, one in which the machinery of the State need not be changed by creating new offices and curtailing added expenses.

"To do this the bill provides that the State Board of Medical Examiners be made a State Board for Registration of Nurses."

There would seem to be but one of two conclusions to be drawn from this remarkable statement: either the nurses of Iowa are ignorant of the underlying principles upon which their "sister States" have based their action, or they lack the courage to fight their own battles and the knowledge and ability to undertake the management of their own affairs.

It seems absolutely incredible that any body of intelligent women should deliberately cut themselves off from all possibility of creating for themselves and for the nurses of their State in future the position of a profession, for without self-government and the right to create the standards of nursing education and to regulate the practice of nursing, professional recognition can never be attained.

This action of the nurses of the State of Iowa, if true, goes to prove that we need not fear opposition from any outside body of people nearly so much as the ignorance or disloyalty of the women of our own profession. In every State nurses have gained the important points for which they stood united. The Iowa nurses have given a set-back to nursing educational progress in this country which it will take generations of nurses to overcome.

The bill gives to the State Board of Medical Examiners absolute power to decide upon the standards of education in the training-schools, and to make such rules for the examination and registration of nurses as it shall see fit. It does not contain a suggestion that nurses shall have now, or at any future time, even a voice in the regulation of their own affairs. Iowa will hardly expect reciprocity with those "sister States" which she has so dishonored.

In this connection, we ask our readers to turn to Miss Dock's comment in the Foreign Department upon the situation in Great Britain. The registration movement began in England many years before the agitation in this country had taken definite form. Because of the lack of union among the English nurses years have been lost, during which time there has been discord of a character most detrimental to progress. American nurses do not need to be reminded that "divided we fall." We may differ on minor local points, but in the great principles involved, which are the right of nurses to regulate the educational standards of the nursing profession, all of the States must stand united or registration fails of its purpose.

We can only hope that before it is too late Iowa may see the error of her proposed action. We call the attention of Iowa nurses to Dr. Welch's views on this very point of the justice of Examining Boards being composed of nurses, to be found on page 487 of this issue. The nurses in the "sister States" have had the approval and support of distinguished medical men in their claim for self-government, and we have yet to know of an organized body of representative physicians who even desire to exercise a dominating control over nursing affairs. Such interference comes only from petty individuals with a selfish end to serve.

PROGRESS OF REGISTRATION

THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA.

GRANTING that the laws of the District of Columbia are unique, and that the nurses of Washington are handicapped at the outset by the unusual form of the local government, the bill introduced in the House of Representatives on January 28 by Mr. Babcock seems to be only a degree better than the proposed Iowa bill, but with this great difference: the Iowa nurses deliberately asked to have registration placed under the control of the Board of Medical Examiners, while in Washington the bill was framed by the Commissioner of the District before the nurses had completed the organization of their association, and if we are rightly informed they were given the alternative "to take this or nothing."

1. The bill provides for a Board of five Nurse Examiners, *appointed by the Commissioner of the District.*

2. The Graduate Nurses' Association of the District of Columbia, which was organized to secure registration, is not recognized nor permitted to nominate the candidates to the Commissioner.

3. The Board of Examiners are made subject to the Board of Medical Supervisors of the District, in which Board of Supervisors is vested the authority—without advice from the Nurse Board of Examiners—to decide upon the standards of education of the training-schools and make such rules for the registration of nurses as it may see fit. There is a similarity in the power given to the Board of Medical Supervisors to the authority vested in the Regents in the New York bill, but with this difference, in the Washington bill the Nurse Board has not the right to recommend or advise as it has in the New York bill. As we interpret the District bill, the Nurse Board examines applicants that are referred to it by the Board of Medical Supervisors under such rules and regulations as the supervisors may direct.

We hope the nurses of the District of Columbia will see to it that this bill is amended to give to the Nurse Board the privilege to recommend to and advise with the Board of Medical Supervisors in the same manner as has been

granted to the nurses of New York. The recognition of the nurses' association is a matter of importance, and is worth trying for.

MASSACHUSETTS.

Massachusetts has a good bill, which was placed before the House on January 29 and the first hearing given on February 15. Miss M. E. P. Davis, chairman of the Legislative Committee of the Massachusetts State Nurses' Association, led the delegation of over one hundred nurses who rallied from all sections of the State in support of the measure. Mrs. Emily Fifield and Dr. James Putnam spoke for the people and the medical profession. Some slight objections were raised, but on the whole the outlook for Massachusetts is favorable. Both of these bills will be published as soon as their fate is known.

CONNECTICUT.

The Graduate Nurses' Association of the State of Connecticut was organized at the New Haven Hospital on February 17 with a representation of sixty-five nurses from different parts of the State. Miss Sophia F. Palmer was the guest of the occasion and the meeting was most enthusiastic. There will be no attempt to draft a bill until the association is fully organized and the nurses of the State have learned to work together for the common good.

NEW YORK STATE.

There has been some unavoidable delay in the Regents' Office at Albany in the work of engrossing the certificates of registration of those applicants approved by the examiners, but certificates are now being issued.

Nurses have become impatient under this long delay, but, like in all new work, there have been obstacles and difficulties in the beginning that will not have to be considered now that a routine has been established and the members of the board know the work.

Nurses who want their certificates this year should get their applications in soon. The vacation season will scatter the examiners, and much can be accomplished before that time if applications come in quickly.

A NEW FIELD FOR NURSES

IN connection with the article on "The Nurse's Work in Milk Stations," Dr. Goler in a personal letter to the editor makes the suggestion that there would seem to be an opening for nurses in the dairies in the country. In writing of this he says:

"It seems to me that there is a career for trained nurses in this line of work, as anyone may well see who would take the pains to visit the so-called dairies in the country, or the city dairies as well. A nurse with some business experience might at first start a business partnership with a small farmer. One such success of this kind of business copartnership would tend to spread the work all over the country. If it is desirable for nurses to go to individual sick-rooms, to offer their services in the Philippines and Cuba, and to work in the slums as district nurses, I think it is equally as desirable for the nurse to give her time and attention to aid in the production of pure milk, and thereby aid in saving the lives of many hundreds, even thousands, of children who otherwise would succumb to the dangers of dirty milk."

When we see the great number of nurses who, after a few years of work,

feel that they must get out of active nursing for at least part of the year, Dr. Goler's suggestion would seem to open a new field to many. Nurses who are farmers' daughters might easily turn their knowledge of bacteriology and pure milk to profit on the farm.

We have given Miss Kennedy's little sketch in her own words, showing a few photographs taken by her during the summer. We can testify that she returned from her seemingly lonely experience at the farm sunburned and happy, ready to take up the burden of her work with renewed strength and vigor.

AN ARMY RESERVE NURSE DEPARTMENT

WE call the attention of our readers to an announcement in the Official Reports of the formation of an emergency corps of volunteer nurses who shall hold themselves in readiness to serve the government in event of war or national calamity.

One naturally associates this announcement, coming just at this time, in some way with the Japanese-Russian War, but the events are only coincident. This call for nurses is the result of a plan which has been under consideration for some time, waiting for a convenient opportunity to undertake the extra work in the Surgeon-General's office. The Nurse Corps department is now running so smoothly that Mrs. Kinney is able to give her attention to the formation of a reserve force, with a view of preventing the occurrence at any future day of the confusion that arose upon the breaking out of the Spanish-American War.

Mrs. Kinney has issued a circular letter to the superintendents of approved training-schools asking for their coöperation in securing a representative body of women for this department of the service.

With ample time to investigate credentials, many unfortunate mistakes arising from the emergency of war should be entirely avoided. Splendid women served in the Spanish War, conducting themselves with dignity, and proving that women can endure hardship under any condition as well as men, but there were too many of the adventurous class enrolled, and many before untried in temptation failed in the moral qualities.

Superintendents who may be called upon to indorse applicants for this service cannot be too rigid in their refusal to vouch for nurses unless they are sure of the womanly qualities as well as the professional. Under the plan that the Nurse Corps department has organized this work, if *politics* can be kept out, it will be "up to" the superintendents if the wrong kind of women are enrolled for emergency service in the army.

THE JOHNS HOPKINS HOSPITAL LOSSES

IN the department of Hospital Items we have printed a clipping authenticated by Miss Nutting, giving in detail an account of the losses of the Johns Hopkins Hospital in the Baltimore fire. We are informed that the revenues of the hospital are diminished one-half, and, as a natural consequence, the work of the institution must be tremendously curtailed unless assistance comes from some unlooked-for quarter.

While our sympathies are with the hospital as a whole, our special anxiety is for the Training-School. With the retrenchment that these losses will make necessary in every department of the hospital work, the preliminary course can

hardly escape some curtailment, and its development, at least for a time, be retarded. This means a serious blow to the profession at large, for the methods that this school has been able to demonstrate have given an impetus to preliminary training that will eventually revolutionize the whole training-school system.

We shall hope to hear that help has been received from some source to ward off the immediate danger, and when the city has recovered from the stunning blow of its terrible disaster, that provision can be made for the continuation of the work of the hospital in all of its departments.

THE ASSOCIATED ALUMNÆ MEETING

THE time decided upon for the Associated Alumnæ meeting in Philadelphia is Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, May 11, 12, and 13, and the change is made to accommodate the Western members who may be going to Berlin.

There are two very important questions to be discussed at this meeting, mentioned before in these papers, and delegates should be selected who are informed and able to deal wisely with complicated subjects.

It will be remembered that the amendments to the by-laws, the consideration of which was commenced in Chicago two years ago, were not completed at the Boston meeting last year because of the difficulty of deciding what provision should be made for the affiliation of the States. The year has brought great changes in the situation. State organization and registration have forged ahead even more rapidly than was anticipated, and the next step must be some kind of affiliation between the States as a means of establishing reciprocity. Shall affiliation be through the National Alumnæ, or will some other form of organization for State affiliation become necessary?

The second vital question is the future ownership of THE AMERICAN JOURNAL OF NURSING? Delegates should be familiar with this subject and able to act intelligently for the association they represent. The situation in a nutshell is this: In the beginning the Associated Alumnæ as a body failed to secure the necessary capital to establish the Magazine. A few members advanced the money necessary, organizing themselves into THE AMERICAN JOURNAL OF NURSING Company, but with the distinct understanding that they would sell out to the Alumnæ Association whenever that body could reimburse them for their outlay. Each year the JOURNAL as a business becomes more valuable, now amounting to more than ten thousand dollars, and the amount to be raised increases with delay. The question is, Shall the Associated Alumnæ make a supreme effort to own the JOURNAL, or will it relinquish the idea conclusively and leave the responsibility and development of the JOURNAL enterprise in the hands of its present owner?

Suggestions through the JOURNAL are invited, and may help to solve these problems, and April will be a very opportune month in which to discuss them.

